



A STUDY IN SCARLET

CHAPTER III

Three weeks had passed since Jefferson Hope and his comrades had departed from Salt Lake City. John Ferrier's heart was sore within him when he thought of the young man's return, and of the impending loss of his adopted child. Yet her bright and happy face recalled him to the arrangement more than any argument could have done. He had always determined, deep down in his resolute heart, that nothing would ever induce him to allow his daughter to wed a Mormon. Such a marriage he regarded as no marriage at all, but as a shame and a disgrace. Whatever he might think of the Mormon doctrine, upon that point he was inflexible. He had to seal his mouth on the subject, however, for to express an orthodox opinion was a dangerous matter in those days in Land of the Saints.

Yes, a dangerous matter—dangerous that even the most saintly dared only whisper their religious opinions with bated breath, lest something which fell from their lips might be misconstrued, and bring down a swift retribution upon them. The victims of persecution had now turned persecutors on their own account, and the sects of the most terrible description. Not the Inquisition of Seville, nor the German Vehmicgericht, nor the secret societies of Italy, were ever able to put a more formidable machinery in motion than that which cast a cloud over the territory of Utah.

Its invisibility, and the mystery which was attached to it, made this organization doubly terrible. It appeared to be omniscient and omnipotent, and yet was neither seen nor heard. The man who held out against the church vanished away, and none knew whether he had gone or what had befallen him. His wife and children wept for him at home, but no father ever returned to tell them how he had fared at the hands of his secret judges. A rash word or a hasty act was followed by annihilation, and yet none knew what the nature might be of this terrible power which was suspended over them. No wonder that men went about in fear and trembling, and that even in the heart of the wilderness they dared not whisper the doubts which oppressed them.

At first this vague and terrible power was exercised only upon the recalcitrants, who, having embraced the Mormon faith, wished afterward to revert to the old religion. So, however, it took a wider range. The supply of adult women was running short, and polygamy, without a female population on which to draw, was a barren doctrine indeed. Strange rumors began to be bandied about—rumors of murdered immigrants and rifled camps in regions where Indians had never been seen. Fresh women appeared in the harems of the elders—women who pined and wept, and bore upon their faces the traces of unextinguishable horror. Belated wanderers upon the mountains spoke of gangs of armed men, masked, stealthy, and noiseless, who "hunted" by them in the darkness. These tales and rumors took substance and shape, and were corroborated and re-corroborated until they resolved themselves into a definite name. To this day, in the lonely ranches of the west, the name of the Danite Band, or the Avenging Angels, is a sinister and ill-omened one.

Fuller knowledge of the organization which produced such terrible results served to increase rather than to lessen the horror which it inspired in the minds of men. None knew who belonged to this ruthless society. The names of the participants in the deeds of blood and violence, done under the name of religion, were kept profoundly secret. The very friend to whom you communicated your misgivings as to the prophet and his mission might be one of those who would come forth at night with fire and sword to exact a terrible reparation. Hence, every man feared his neighbor, and none spoke of the things which were nearest his heart.

One fine morning, John Ferrier was about to set out to his wheat-fields, when he heard the click of the latch, and looking through the window, saw a stout, sandy-haired, middle-aged man coming up the pathway. His heart leaped to his mouth, for this was none other than the great Brigham Young himself. Full of trepidation—for he knew that such a visit boded him little good—Ferrier ran to the door to greet the Mormon chief. The latter, however, received his salutation coldly, and followed him with a stern face into the sitting-room.

"Brother Ferrier," he said, taking a seat, and eyeing the farmer keenly from under his light-colored eyelashes, "the true believers have been good friends to you. We picked you up when you were starving in the desert, we shared our food with you, let you safe to the chosen valley, gave you a goodly share of land, and allowed you to wax rich under our protection. Is not this so?"

"It is so," answered John Ferrier. "In return for all this we asked but one condition; that was that you should embrace the true faith, and conform in every way to its usages. (This you promised to do; and this, if common report says truly, you have neglected.)"

"And how have I neglected it?" asked Ferrier, throwing up his hands in expostulation. "Have I not attended to the common fund? Have I not attended at the temple? Have I not—"

"Where are your wives?" asked Young, looking round him. "Call them in, that I may greet them."

"It is true that I have not married," Ferrier answered. "But women were few, and there were many who had better claims than I. I was not a lonely man; I had my daughter to attend to my wants."

"It is of that daughter that I would speak to you," said the leader of the Mormons. "She has grown to be the flower of Utah and has found favor in

the eyes of many who are high in the land."

John Ferrier groaned internally. "There are stories of her which I would fain disbelieve—stories that she is sealed to some Gentile. This must be the gossip of idle tongues. What is the thirteenth rule in the code of the sainted Joseph Smith? 'Let every maiden of the true faith marry one of the elect; for if she wed a Gentile she commits a grievous sin.' This being so it is impossible that you, who profess the holy creed, should suffer your daughter to violate it."

John Ferrier made no answer, but he played nervously with his riding whip.

"Upon this one point your whole faith shall be tested—so it has been decided in the sacred council of four. The girl is young, and we would not have her wed a Gentile; neither would we deprive her of all choice. We elders have many helpers (Hobert C. Kimball, in one of his sermons, alludes to his hundred wives under this endearing epithet), but our children must also be provided. Stangerson has a son, and Drebber has a son, and either of them would gladly welcome your daughter to their home. Let her choose between them. They are young and rich, and of the true faith. What say you to that?"

Ferrier remained silent for some little time, with his brows knitted. "You will give us time," he said, at last. "My daughter is very young—she is scarce of an age to marry."

"She shall have a month to choose," said Young, rising from his seat. "At the end of that time she shall give her answer."

He was passing through the door, when he turned, with flushed face and flashing eyes. "It were better for you, John Ferrier," he thundered, "that you and she were now lying blanched skeletons upon the Sierra Blanco, than that you should put your weak wills against the orders of the Holy Four!"

With a threatening gesture of his hand he turned from the door, and Ferrier heard his heavy step scrunching along the shingle path.

He was still sitting with his elbows upon his knees, considering how he should broach the matter to his daughter, when a soft hand was laid upon his, and looking up he saw her standing beside him. One glance at her pale, frightened face showed him that she had heard what had passed.

"I could not help it," she said, in answer to his look. "His voice rang through the house. O father, father, what shall we do?"

"Don't you scare yourself," he answered, drawing her to him, and passing his broad, rough hand caressingly over her chestnut hair. "We'll fix it up somehow or another. You don't find your fancy kind of lessening for this chap, do you?"

A sob and a squeeze of his hand were her only answer.

"No; of course not. I shouldn't care to hear you say you did. He's a likely lad, and he's a Christian, which is more than these folk here, in spite of all their praying and preaching. There's a party starting for Nevada to-morrow, and I'll manage to send him a message letting him know the hole we are in. If I know anything of that young man, he'll be back here with a speed that would whip electro-telegraphs."

Lucy laughed through her tears at her father's description.

"When he comes, he will advise us for the best. It is for you that I am frightened, dear. One hears—one hears such dreadful stories about those who oppose the prophet; something terrible always happens to them."

"But we haven't opposed him yet," her father answered. "It will be time to look out for squalls when we do. We have a clear month before us; at the end of that, I guess we had best shin out of Utah."

"Leave Utah?"

"That's about the size of it."

"But the farm?"

"We will raise as much as we can in money and let the rest go. To tell the truth, Lucy, it isn't the first time I have thought of doing it. I don't care about knocking under to any man, as these folk do to their damned prophet. I'm a free-born American, and it's all new to me. Guess I'm too old to learn. If he comes browsing about this farm, he might chance to run up against a charge of buckshot traveling in the opposite direction."

"But they won't let us leave," his daughter objected.

"Wait till Jefferson comes, and we'll soon manage that. In the meantime, don't get your eyes swelled up, else he'll be walking into me when he sees you. There's nothing to be afraid about, and there's no danger at all."

John Ferrier uttered these consoling remarks in a very confident tone, but she could not help observing that he paid unusual care to the fastening of the doors that night, and that he carefully cleaned and loaded the rusty old shotgun which hung upon the wall of his bedroom.

TO BE CONTINUED.

In the Kitchen.

Mrs. Bancro tells the readers of Good Housekeeping that the wood of the kitchen doors and moldings should be painted to match the wainscot. As for floor coverings, there are conflicting opinions. Some housekeepers declare that the floors should be of spruce or pine, and if well laid can be weekly scrubbed and kept spotless without being covered. Others assert that a linoleum cover is desirable, while the home woman invariably believes that a good oilcloth is all that is required for the room where the culinary art is pursued. Any of the three is suitable; all are in good taste and will be found satisfactory, provided the sink, washbasin and range have before them an oilcloth mat for constant usage to preserve the floor in those exposed portions. For the windows a linen shade is all that is required, but that should be kept in good working order.

THE DINING TABLE.

INFORMATION ABOUT ALL KINDS AND QUALITIES OF TABLE LINEN.

All White Linen is the Preferred Style. Napkins Correspond With the Cloth. Centerpieces, Serviettes and Dollies May Be Embroidered in Colors.

At present the preference is for all white table linen. Napkins should always correspond with the cloth, and of course damask as fine as the purse can buy is in rule. Small patterns are never out of style. Such are stars, balls and cobweb, acorn borders with vine centers, daisies, buttercups and similar designs.

The housekeeper skillful with her needle takes delight in outlining the borders in Kensington or stem stitch, either in white or washsilks for luncheon cloths. On uncolored table linen both china and silver are seen to their best advantage. If a bit of color is liked, it may be introduced in centerpieces and serviettes for the bread plate, the olive dish and in dollies. In fact, the cloth may serve as a background for as much display as convenience will allow.

Napkins remain the same large size, from 22 to 27 inches square. Dollies are made in diverse sizes and materials. The finest are bolting cloth, either exquisitely embroidered or painted. They are sometimes finished at home in sheer linen or Japanese silk. A little skill will enable the housekeeper to paint them delicately in dull blues, pinks and yellows. The patterns may be either conventionalized flowers on a tiny scale or birds and landscapes rather suggested in outlines than filled in solidly. Fruit napkins are sometimes decorated with mottoes borrowed from Shakespeare, from "Alice in Wonderland" or from original phrases. In this decoration the imagination will find ample play. Dollies for bonbons, salted almonds and flower vases should have special finish.

Open work and hemstitched linen are still popular. Under them is usually laid colored linen, and this again covers a double layer of double faced white cotton flannel. Upon this linen not only looks better, but it is more serviceable. No starch, or at most but an infinitesimal portion, should be used in table linen. Nor is it good taste to have it ironed in center folds and flutings in imitation of hotel table linen.

In embroidering serviettes it is well to secure harmony between the decoration and that for which it is used. For instance, breadcloths some 18 inches square may be outlined in gold colored areas of wheat. For the most dish the heavy unbleached linen is both appropriate and serviceable. A hem finished article with hemstitching is more durable than fringe. Table mats crocheted in thin cotton or sewed in fanciful patterns out of coarse cord may be further adorned with milky white glass beads. Those will effectively keep hot dishes from discoloring the surface of the table, according to The Decorator and Furnisher.

A Good Thread Holder. A convenient thread holder is very easily made. Take an oblong piece of material an inch wider than a No. 30 spool of thread. Cut a half inch square out of each corner, so an edge that wide can be turned up all around. Line the leather with silk and bind with narrow ribbon and fasten the turned up sides in place. In the shallow tray lay as many spools of thread as it will hold from No. 30 to 80. Ribbon fastened at the end and run through the holes and tied will keep the spools in place.

A Good Rice Custard. Soak one-half cupful of cooked rice in a pint of hot milk until grains are distinct; the beaten yolks of 3 eggs, a quarter cupful of sugar. Cook like hot custard. Beat in the stiff whites or pour in a dish, and when cool cover with meringue (two whites) and brown. Serve cold.

Try, Try Again. Soaking a wick in vinegar and drying before using to prevent smoking. Spirits of salt for ink stains on mahogany.

A slip of tery started in a hanging glass bowl of water.

A WRECK of the physical constitution often comes from unnatural, pernicious habits, contracted through ignorance or from excess. Such habits result in loss of many powers, nervous exhaustion, low spirits, impaired memory, low nervous, irritable temper, and a thousand other ailments of the mind and body. Epilepsy, paralysis, softening of the brain and even drowsy insanity sometimes result from such reckless self-abuse.

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Ladies whose systems are poisoned and whose blood is in an impure condition, due to menstrual irregularities, are peculiarly benefited by the wonderful tonic and blood cleansing properties of P. P. P.—Prickly Ash, Poke Root and Potassium.

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